

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4933

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WO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: PERUVIAN PRESS EXPERIMENT ON SCHEDULE

1. IN A MEETING WITH WORKERS AT EL COMERCIO ON APRIL 28, PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY ZIMMERMANN INFORMED THEM THAT THE TRANSFER OF NEWSPAPERS TO POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN JULY, I.E., ON SCHEDULE. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT ZIMMERMANN ASSURED NEWSMEN THAT THEIR JOBS WOULD NOT BE ENDANGERED. HE DID NOT SPELL OUT THE DETAILS OF THE TURNOVER.

2. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT LAST JULY, THE GOVERNMENT EXPROPRIATED PERU'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS DECLARING THAT HENCEFORTH THE PRESS WOULD NOT REPRESENT THE VESTED INTERESTS OF ITS PREVIOUS OWNERS BUT REPRESENT PERU'S MASSES, ORGANIZED INTO REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS SUCH AS THE NATIONAL AGRARIAN CONFEDERATION, THE INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITIES OR THE PROFESSIONAL AND SERVICE SECTORS. THE PRESS TRANSFER TO THESE GROUPINGS WAS ANNOUNCED FOR JULY 1975 AND, MEANTIME, GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED DIRECTORS HAVE RUN THE NEWSPAPERS.

3. THE PRESS STATUTE REGULATING THE NEWSPAPERS GAVE THE NEW DIRECTORS THE POWER TO FIRE NEWSMEN NOTWITHSTANDING YEARS OF SERVICE. (HENCE, ZIMMERMANN'S REASSURANCE TO EL COMERCIO'S CURRENT

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WORKERS.) IN THEIR STEAD, THE DIRECTORS HIRED JOURNALISTS WITH

IDEAS AKIN TO THEIR OWN. A LEFTIST, MILITANTLY ANTI-AMERICAN TONE SOON CAME TO PREDOMINATE IN THE PRESS. AT THE SAME TIME, CIRCULATIONS DECLINED AS PROPAGANDA FREQUENTLY REPLACED NEWS AND BALANCED CRITICAL REPORTING.

4. THERE ARE MANY DOUBTS AS TO HOW GOP INTENDS TO TURN THE PRESS OVER TO SOCIETY'S ORGANIZED SECTORS WHICH, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE COMESINO CONFEDERATION, ARE DIVIDED AND UNDEFINED. NONE-THELESS, PRESS SECRETARY ZIMMERMANN HAS DECLARED THAT THE TRANSFER WILL PROCEED.

5. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY-USIS SOURCES, THREE NEWSPAPERS MAY FOLD. THESE ARE CORREO AND OJO, SISTER NEWSPAPERS, THE FIRST OF WHICH HAS BEEN MISMANAGED AND IS PRODUCING HEAVY LOSSES, AND ULTIMA HORA, WHOSE MILITANT ANTI-COMMUNISM (UNDER ISMAEL FRIAS) HAS IRRITATED THE REGIME, PARTICULARLY INFLUENTIAL CIVILIANS SUCH AS ZIMMERMANN. THERE IS ALSO DOUBT WHETHER EL COMERCIO'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC, ANTI-COMMUNIST MANAGEMENT CAN SURVIVE THE TRANSFER.

6. THE PRESS SITUATION BECOMES EVEN MORE COMPLEX WHEN THE QUESTION OF ITS REGULATION IS ADDRESSED. REPORTEDLY, LEFTIST ELEMENTS WITHIN THE GOP ARE DISSATISFIED WITH GENERAL SEGURA'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE NATIONAL INFORMATION OFFICE, WHICH IS BASICALLY A PROPAGANDA MINISTRY. UNDER SEGURA, WHATEVER WESTERN INFLUENCES ONE CAN STILL IDENTIFY IN THE PRESS HAVE NOT YET BEEN ELIMINATED. FURTHERMORE, SEGURA IS ACCUSED OF FAVORING INDIVIDUALS SUCH AS FRIAS OF ULTIMA HORA. TO COMPLICATE THE PICTURE, SEGURA IS ALSO CRITICIZED BY MILITARY MODERATES WHO ARE FED UP WITH EXPRESO'S COMMUNISM AS WELL AS BY THE FRANKLY LEFTIST LINE OF THE GOP-OWNED LA CRONICA.

7. CONTROL OF THE PRESS IS CLEARLY A PRIZE WORTH SEEKING AND PERU'S LEFTIST CIVILIAN ADVISORS SEEM TO BE DOING THEIR BEST TO ACHIEVE IT, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE ARMY'S RELATIVE INEXPERIENCE IN THIS AREA. THE ARMY, ON THE OTHER HAND, LIKES TO THINK IT CAN CONTROL THE PRESS THROUGH THE INFORMATION OFFICE. IN PRACTICE, THIS HAS OFTEN MEANT PRESERVING THE GOP FROM CRITICISM WHILE ALLOWING LEFTISTS TO EDUCATE PERU ABOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD.

8. THESE ARE SOME OF THE MANY FACTORS WHICH THE EMBASSY WILL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REPORT ON AS THE PERUVIAN PRESS EXPERIMENT UNFOLDS.  
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## Message Attributes

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